

## Federal Election Commission

## § 111.37

of the civil money penalty and an acknowledgment of the respondent's payment.

### **§ 111.35 If the respondent decides to challenge the alleged violation or proposed civil money penalty, what should the respondent do?**

(a) Within forty (40) days of the Commission's reason to believe finding, the respondent shall submit to the Commission a written response.

(b) The written response shall contain the following:

(1) Reason(s) why the respondent is challenging the reason to believe finding and/or civil money penalty which may consist of:

(i) The existence of factual errors; and/or

(ii) The improper calculation of the civil money penalty; and/or

(iii) The existence of extraordinary circumstances that were beyond the control of the respondent and that were for a duration of at least 48 hours and that prevented the respondent from filing the report in a timely manner;

(2) The factual basis supporting the reason(s); and

(3) Supporting documentation.

(4) Examples of circumstances that will not be considered extraordinary include, but are not limited to, the following:

(i) Negligence;

(ii) Problems with vendors or contractors;

(iii) Illness of staff;

(iv) Computer failures (except failures of the Commission's computers); and

(v) Other similar circumstances.

### **§ 111.36 Who will review the respondent's written response?**

(a) A reviewing officer shall review the respondent's written response. The reviewing officer shall be a person who has not been involved in the reason to believe finding.

(b) The reviewing officer shall review the reason to believe finding with supporting documentation and the respondent's written response with supporting documentation. The reviewing officer may request supplemental information from the respondent and/or the Commission staff. The respondent

shall submit the supplemental information to the reviewing officer within a time specified by the reviewing officer. The reviewing officer will be entitled to draw an adverse inference from the failure by the respondent to submit the supplemental information.

(c) All documents required to be submitted by the respondents pursuant to this section and § 111.35 should be submitted in the form of affidavits or declarations.

(d) If the Commission staff, after the respondent files a written response pursuant to § 111.35, forwards any additional documents pertaining to the matter to the reviewing officer for his or her examination, the reviewing officer shall also furnish a copy of the document(s) to the respondents.

(e) Upon completion of the review, the reviewing officer shall forward a written recommendation to the Commission along with all documents required under this section and 11 CFR 111.32 and 111.35.

(f) The reviewing office shall also forward a copy of the recommendation to the respondent. The respondent may file with the Commission Secretary a written response to the recommendation within ten (10) days of transmittal of the recommendation. This response may not raise any arguments not raised in the respondent's original written response or not directly responsive to the reviewing officer's recommendation.

### **§ 111.37 What will the Commission do once it receives the respondent's written response and the reviewing officer's recommendation?**

(a) If the Commission, after having found reason to believe and after reviewing the respondent's written response and the reviewing officer's recommendation, determines by an affirmative vote of at least four (4) of its members, that the respondent has violated 2 U.S.C. 434(a) and the amount of the civil money penalty, the Commission shall authorize the reviewing officer to notify the respondent by letter of its final determination.

(b) If the Commission, after reviewing the reason to believe finding, the respondent's written response, and the

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reviewing officer's written recommendation, determines by an affirmative vote of at least four (4) of its members, that no violation has occurred, or otherwise terminates its proceedings, the Commission shall authorize the reviewing officer to notify the respondent by letter of its final determination.

(c) The Commission will modify the proposed civil money penalty only if the respondent is able to demonstrate that the amount of the proposed civil money penalty was calculated on an incorrect basis.

(d) The Commission may determine, by an affirmative vote of at least four of its members, that a violation of 2 U.S.C. 434(a) has occurred but waive the penalty because the respondent has convincingly demonstrated the existence of extraordinary circumstances that were beyond the respondent's control and that were for a duration of at least 48 hours. The Commission shall authorize the reviewing officer to notify the respondent by letter of its final determination.

### **§ 111.38 Can the respondent appeal the Commission's final determination?**

Yes; within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Commission's final determination under 11 CFR 111.37, the respondent may submit a written petition to the district court of the United States for the district in which the respondent resides, or transacts business, requesting that the final determination be modified or set aside. The respondent's failure to raise an argument in a timely fashion during the administrative process shall be deemed a waiver of the respondent's right to present such argument in a petition to the district court under 2 U.S.C. 437g.

### **§ 111.39 When must the respondent pay the civil money penalty?**

(a) If the respondent does not submit a written petition to the district court of the United States, the respondent must remit payment of the civil money penalty within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Commission's final determination under 11 CFR 111.37.

(b) If the respondent submits a written petition to the district court of the United States and, upon the final dis-

position of the civil action, is required to pay a civil money penalty, the respondent shall remit payment of the civil money penalty to the Commission within thirty (30) days of the final disposition of the civil action. The final disposition may consist of a judicial decision which is not reviewed by a higher court.

(c) Failure to pay the civil money penalty may result in the commencement of collection action under 31 U.S.C. 3701 *et seq.* (1996), or a civil suit pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 437g(a)(6)(A), or any other legal action deemed necessary by the Commission.

### **§ 111.40 What happens if the respondent does not pay the civil money penalty pursuant to 11 CFR 111.34 and does not submit a written response to the reason to believe finding pursuant to 11 CFR 111.35?**

(a) If the Commission, after the respondent has failed to pay the civil money penalty and has failed to submit a written response, determines by an affirmative vote of at least four (4) of its members that the respondent has violated 2 U.S.C. 434(a) and determines the amount of the civil money penalty, the respondent shall be notified by letter of its final determination.

(b) The respondent shall transmit payment of the civil money penalty to the Commission within thirty (30) days of receipt of the Commission's final determination.

(c) Failure to pay the civil money penalty may result in the commencement of collection action under 31 U.S.C. 3701 *et seq.* (1996), or a civil suit pursuant to 2 U.S.C. 437g(a)(6)(A), or any other legal action deemed necessary by the Commission.

### **§ 111.41 To whom should the civil money penalty payment be made payable?**

Payment of civil money penalties shall be made in the form of a check or money order made payable to the Federal Election Commission.

### **§ 111.42 Will the enforcement file be made available to the public?**

(a) Yes; the Commission shall make the enforcement file available to the public.